

MEA-MFT vacancy savings fact sheet

What is the proposed vacancy savings rate at 24/7 facilities?

The proposed vacancy savings rate at 24/7 facilities is 4%. A 4% vacancy savings at 24/7 facilities will result in inadequate staffing, mandatory overtime, unsafe working conditions, a decline in the quality of services provided, and problems of recruitment and retention.

How will a 4% vacancy savings rate affect the prisons?

Thirty nine positions will have to be left vacant, mostly at Montana State Prison. Mandatory overtime is already creating problems at MSP. Understaffing would result in unsafe working conditions, problems with recruitment and retention, and morale problems.

What is the proposed vacancy savings rate at probation and parole? How will a 7% vacancy savings rate affect probation and parole?

In Adult Probation and Parole, 22 positions will have to be left vacant. In Juvenile Probation and Pine Hills, 10 positions will have to be left vacant.

How will vacancy savings affect state health care facilities?

Montana State Hospital is already experiencing a high rate of violent assaults on staff—over 247 between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008. Montana Development Center is understaffed, leading to increased risk for assaults on staff and patients by younger and more violent patients.

MEA-MFT proposal--

Vacancy Savings exemption for 24/7 facilities and probation and parole:

Exempt direct care staff at 24/7 facilities including MT State Hospital, MT Developmental Center, MT Columbia Falls Montana Veterans Home, MT Chemical Dependency Center, Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility, Riverside Youth Correctional Facility, Montana Women's Prison, and Montana State Prison. Exempt probation and parole officers from vacancy savings.

Why use American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) funding to reverse vacancy savings?

Excerpt from US Department of Education State Fiscal Stabilization Fund fact sheet on ARRP:

"Funds to Support Public Safety and Other Government Services"

"States must use 18.2 percent of the SFSF funds for education (school modernization, renovation, and repair), public safety, (*emphasis added*) and other government services. This may include assistance for early learning, elementary and secondary education, and IHEs. In addition, states may use these funds for modernization, renovation, or repair of public school and public or private college facilities."

Public safety will be enhanced, and jobs will be maintained or created, as a result of using ARRA funding to eliminate vacancy savings in these agencies.